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ABSTRACT

The early years of the twentieth century, years when the forces of capitalism tested the nation's will to keep the promises of democracy for all citizens, represent a time of national moral and intellectual lethargy. The muckraking movement sought to instill in the American mind a sense of outrage by exposing the evils of the new social order. If the American people could be made to understand the plight of those being trampled by the nation's amorphous social, political, and economic institutions, the Muckrakers believed, the people would implement the necessary reforms via the democratic process. Many of these journalists, especially Ray Stannard Baker, saw democracy as more than a political apparatus: they saw it as a force for establishing a social morality. Baker's vision of an American democratic structure, or "New Democracy" led to muckraking investigations on labor-capital relations, racism, and religion, during the years 1900-1910, the golden age of muckraking. In the same way that capitalism set no limits on the amount of wealth an individual could acquire, so Baker believed that the promises inherent in American democracy would allow the human spirit to evolve to greater, as yet unforseen heights. Baker's ideal democratic state would instill in its citizens a commitment to service to humanity and society, a desire to maintain the highest educational standards, and the spirit of unselfish brotherly love. (Seventy-seven notes are included.) (MS)

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Ray Stannard Baker and The Spirit of Democracy, 1900-1910

by
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and
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Ray Stannard Baker
and The Spirit of Democracy,
1900-1910

The journalist is a true servant of democracy.[1]

Despite the grand ideals of democratic freedom proclaimed by the United States in the late eighteenth century, this country's history is scarred by the savage injustices committed in the name of American determinism. From the slaughter of the Indian nations, to the enslavement of blacks and the internment of Japanese citizens, to the continued subjugation of women and minorities, America has marched headlong into the future, seemingly, at times, without regard for its most basic obligations.

The early years of the twentieth century, years when the forces of capitalism tested the nation's will to keep the promises of democracy for all citizens, represent a time of national moral and intellectual lethargy. As the self-indulgent 1890s turned cold and competitive under the influence of rapid industrialization and urbanization, an organized journalistic movement appeared on the American scene dedicated to returning the nation to its designated moral course.

The muckraking movement, which, in many ways, was the focal point of Progressivism, sought to instill in the American mind a sense of outrage by

exposing the evils of the new social order. If the American people could be made to understand the plight of those being trampled by the nation's amorphous social, political and economic institutions, the Muckraker's believed, the people would implement the necessary reforms via the democratic process. Many of the these journalists, especially Ray Stannard Baker, saw democracy as more than a political apparatus: they saw it as a force for establishing a social morality.[2]

Characterized by fellow Muckraker Upton Sinclair as being "very mild, sweet, kind, a New England conscience, cultured,"[3] Baker led a dynamic life as a writer -- a life marked by external rewards and internal quests for faith. In the years before World War I, he enjoyed the reputation as "America's #1 Reporter," having contributed more than 200 articles on a variety of subjects to the nation's leading periodicals. Later in his career, after muckraking had virtually ceased as an organized movement, Baker won the Pulitzer Prize for his eight-volume work Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters. Baker, who spent his life pursuing, but never writing, what he half-seriously called the "Great American Novel" that would "present a complete picture of American life,"[4] also produced nine works of fiction under the pseudonym David Grayson.[5]

Though his desire to become a novelist was great, Baker, until the time of his death at age 76, was a committed journalist. He believed the work of journalism reinforced his faith in democracy, which, he felt, must adapt to the demands of the industrialized, urbanized twentieth century. According to Baker biographer John E. Semonche, the journalist maintained that "the old emphasis on individual rights was outmoded in American society; what was needed was an emphasis upon social responsibilities and duties."[6] While Baker, in published works, did not write specifically on the topic,

his conception of what democracy was and should have been is inextricably woven into his muckraking pieces.

Toward the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Baker, who earlier in the decade had claimed to be apolitical,[7] began sketching his vision of an American democratic structure in his private journals. In his "New Democracy," "service" was the means to salvation:

> Subordination leads to greater perfection: it is the deep philosophy which underlies the doctrine of unselfishness. Perfection is completeness: individuals' rights lose themselves in social development: the individual becomes a function, not an end of itself. That is the meaning of the teaching "Lose your life and save it!"[8]

This paper examines the evolution of the "New Democracy" as it unfolded in Baker's muckraking on labor-capital relations, racism and religion, his main areas of investigation from 1900-1910, the golden age of muckraking.

Muckraking and the Progressive Era

Looking back, in later years, I have thought of the period in America, including the last few years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, as the American Renascence (sic) even the great American Renascence.[9]

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." In 1776, with these words, the United States of America declared its independence from the British empire. The founders of this country, inspired by the humanistic liberalism that spawned from the epoch of the Enlightenment,[10] took the boldest political step the world had ever witness -- the creation of a democracy, a system of government "deriving (its) just powers from the Consent of the Governed."

Inherent in the philosophical framework of democracy, which was born of revolutionaries, is the power, and privilege, for individuals and groups, to disagree with the body politic, to rebel against foolish traditions, to stage (counter) revolutions. In less than 150 years after the purest ideals of government were penned, America, during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, experienced two great moral, political and economic revolutions: the Civil War and industrialization. However, as Baker himself observed, "revolutions . . . change names, they do not at once change human relationships."[11]

When the Civil War ended, America, as a nation, was reunited; but as a people searching for their own new identity, Americans were again divided, drawing lines on the basis of hatred and ignorance, along the distinction of skin color. On December 18, 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment liberated some four million blacks and changed them in name from "slave" to "freeman." One year later, with the Fourteenth Amendment, the designation for blacks was changed once again -- this time from "freeman" to American citizen. With the passage of these amendments, the social structure of America, especially in the South, had, in effect, been inverted by force. And by force it would attempt to right itself. The Ku Klux Klan,[12] the Patrollers and the Bloody Shirt Movement were the cruel agencies that restratified society, returning the white aristocrats to the top, the poor whites to the middle, the blacks to the bottom. Society had indeed assembled anew, only to form old human relationships.[13]

In the same respect that blacks were brought to this country for the sake of the white's profit, big business -- a consequence of rapid industrialization and the forces of capitalism -- sought to maximize its profits at the expense of laborers, including women and children. As industrialization

created an increasingly hostile work environment, laborers, who had become more or less subservient to machines, began to feel the estrangement between themselves and their powerful bosses. Mixing in the crucible of mines, mills and sweatshops, class consciousness and alienation gave rise to labor unions, the working-class effort to belay the development of an American feudalistic society.[14]

Hand in hand with industrialization came the phenomenon of urbanization. From 1890 to 1900 the United States experienced a total population growth of 20 percent; but in that same period, the population of the nation's cities increased 37 percent. The cities, which began as trading ports for an expanding agrarian society, had become "storm centers" of the new industrial order, rife with social maladjustment and unrest that strained to the "breaking point" the spiritual fiber of the nation.[15] Poverty, unemployment and the growth of slum areas were the bitter fruits of America's capitalist democracy during the first decade of the twentieth century.

At a time when the nation was crying out for moral guidance, the churches, which were themselves often wealthy institutions bent on material, not spiritual rewards, were dismal failures.[16] During the early days of the 1900s, business, politics and religion -- the institutional triad of American democracy -- had all but abandoned the individual human being, the one it had sworn to protect.[17]

As the United States began to take the first fledgling steps into the modern age, the nation found itself adrift on a sea of moral turbulence. The juggernaut of industrialization, which had come rushing out of the pain and bitterness of Reconstruction, had left in its wake extreme racism, tense labor-capital relations and churches that were monuments to hypocrisy. These were some of the societal conditions that paved the way for Progressivism,

an essentially middle-class moralistic political movement that sought to arouse the conscience of the people in order to purify American life.[18]

The Progressive Era, and its concomitant reform movements, loosely spanned the period from the end of the Spannish-American War to America's entry into World War I. But to view Progressivism within the narrow framework of definable boundaries belies its significance as a mode of American political thought. Whether the term is taken to represent definite groups -- radical farmers, urban elite, big-city masses, Populists or Socialists -- or an attitude of intense optimism and fervent faith in democracy, it in no way embodied the universal character of the early twentieth century. Like many great political movements (i.e., the American Revolution) the real work of Progressivism was carried off by a minority while many others simply adopted "Progressive" as a fashionable epithet.[19] Furthermore, some of the basic tenets of Progressivism -- the belief that the conservative notion of laissez faire capitalism, without the motivation of the people and the positive powers of government, could never bring about substantive social change, for example -- existed earlier and did not fade away when the United States first declared war on Germany.[20]

The key ingredient of Progressivism was activism; government was an extension of the people, not separate from them, and to effect social progress the people must be mobilized to change the government, which would in turn change society. Essentially liberal and dynamic, Progressivism represented, to a certain extent, a rebirth of the original ideals on which America was founded.

In many ways, however, twentieth century Progressivism was only a continuation of the response to industrialization that began after the Civil War. With its roots in the Granger Movement of the 1870s and the Populist Movement

of the 1890s -- movements that sought to regulate big business -- Progressivism first took aim at the most obvious paradox produced by the new industrial order: abject poverty in the shadow of fantastic wealth and technological progress.[21] By 1900, with an estimated 3,800 millionaires in the United States, nine-tenths of the nation's wealth was in the hands of one-tenth of the population.[22] Though it would appear that the Progressives took off from a Marxian premise, the Progressives were not advocates of violent revolution. In essence, the Progressives strove to become the conscience of the nation, to develop the moral will, to enhance intellectual insight and to stimulate the political and administrative agencies to remedy the ills of rapid industrial growth -- ills that could largely be traced to the class schism created by the maldistribution of wealth.[23] The Progressives were seeking to implement their social agenda, not through a revolution of arms, but through a revolution in thinking.[24]

Though the Progressives did manage to wield considerable social and political influence during the early years of the twentieth century, the general movement was diffused, with many activist groups operating on many diverse fronts, and to some extent unorganized. But a new breed of American writer -- young, crusading writers who sought to "penetrate popular ignorance . . . to make suffering real to uninvolved citizens" -- helped bring the Progressive Era sharply into focus.[25]

These were the Muckrakers, journalists with an almost scientific interest in human behavior and a deep confidence in the promise of American democracy.[26] Just as the term Progressive is inappropriate when applied exclusively to the reform agitations of the years 1900-1915, muckraking, in its essence, cannot be regarded solely within that same limited lifespan. Muckraking, like Progressivism, was a designation for an attitude, a style, an approach to the

work of journalism that made it substantially different from what might be considered conventional journalism. To be sure, muckraking, or the "literature of exposure," existed before the turn of the century -- the abolitionists, Thomas Paine, even Jesus Christ have been considered Muckrakers -- and did not simply fade from the American scene with the advent of World War I. Uncovering and researching stories in much the same way a sociologist or historian might approach a topic, not just covering an event, and relying on first-hand experience instead of official sources, were, and are, the hallmarks of muckraking.[27]

While dedicated to exposing the evils they found in society, the Muckrakers were more than mere exposers. Filled with what Ida Tarbell called "righteous indignation,"[28] they were the vanguard of Progressivism's revolution in thinking. Attempting to be the "makers of understanding,"[29] the Muckrakers believed that if the nation knew of the toils of women and children in factories, of the oppression of blacks, of the corruption in big business, political machines and unions, Americans would work the magic of reform.[30] Of the Muckrakers and their fervor, Sinclair wrote that these journalists became Muckrakers "not because they love corruption but because they hate it with an intensity that forbids them to think about anything else while corruption sits enthroned."[31]

Though the Muckrakers were neither "doctrinaire reformers nor hard-boiled economists,"[32] there lay behind their reporting a passionate sympathy for the underdog. Baker, who was counted among the more diligent practitioners of scholarly, conscientious muckraking, set this context for the muckraking movement and the Muckrakers' role in society:

> The best journalist of today occupies the exact place of the prophet of old: he cries out the truth & (sic) calls for reform. . . The news is the way God speaks to men.[33]

Baker on Labor and Industry

The ancient antagonism between labor and capital . . . is apparently giving place to a very different . . . division in our industrial life, in which each industry, close-knit, combining both employer and employee, may stand solid against the world.[34]

In 1899, Baker's hopes of writing his "Great American Novel," which would depict "the explosive new economic and social and perhaps political forces that affected American life," began to dwindle. To write such a novel, Baker "needed much more extensive knowledge of American economic and business conditions" than he possessed at the time. After seven years as a reporter for the Chicago Record, Baker, upon pursuing this topic for McClure's, discovered that the United States was experiencing a period of "growth, expansion, and prosperity." America, at the turn of the century, as Baker put it, was entering the age of "The New Prosperity."[35]

The wave of the new prosperity swept over virtually every American industry. From the great meatpackers of Chicago, to the railroads and the miners and the farmers, the American economy appeared to be pulling out of the panic of the early 1890s. Perhaps no industry, however, was more sensitive to the changing economic scene than the iron and steel business. Growth, expansion and progress required machines, and machines required iron and steel.

As the psychological mood of the nation rode alongside industries on the crest of the prosperity wave, Americans began to seek ways to satisfy their visions of "glory . . . and expansion." With banks loaning money at rates of two and three percent, with speculators, drunk on this cheap money, investing wildly, and with Wall Street loading up "with stocks of every description," Baker, at first, saw the trend toward capitalization as the "natural flowering of hard times." When Baker first began to survey the American business

scene, he could only muster ambivalence for the huge new trusts:

> . . . there is much plausibility as well as reason in the argument that a single great corporation can conduct a business more cheaply than many smaller ones, and therefore earn larger profits. And the fact that the combination may be a monopoly with the power of raising prices arbitrarily, if it chooses, appeals to greed and cupidity.[36]

If the rise of trusts was a natural occurrence of the times, so, for Baker, was the rise of labor organizations. "To the historian of our time," Baker wrote in 1902, "two great events will stand out, each of which by some will be regarded as a grave danger to American institutions, and by others as the most perfect instrument of development and progress."[37] The first was the "organization of the greatest corporation in the world": United States Steel; the second, the "nearly complete unification of workingmen in coal-mining": The United Mine Workers of America.

For Baker, the similarities between the two were striking. Both the corporation and the union sought to regulate competition, control markets and regulate wages -- "one to pay as little as possible, the other to get as much as possible." Their methods to achieve these ends were also "curiously similar":

> . . . Both seek stronger and closer organization in order to crush out the non-unionist, whether company or "scab"; . . . both seek to extend their own market -- the one by controlling sources of production, securing lower freight rates and so on, the other by the use of boycott and the union label; and both seek favorable legislation.[38]

As Baker delved deeper into the relationship between labor and capital he found both institutions to be despotic, actively participating in industrial warfare and lawlessness, starving and murdering non-union workers. In many areas of the country -- including New York, Chicago, San Francisco and parts of Colorado -- Baker reported that the unions and the corporations

had achieved a state of "armed neutrality." If the power base shifted, and violence erupted between the corporations and the unions, the one with the mightier fist usually prevailed. The victims of this power struggle, Baker learned, were the so-called scabs -- the non-union worker -- and the American public.

Baker's most in-depth work on the victims of union and corporate tensions was published in 1903 under the title "The Right To work," one of the first so-called muckraking pieces. For this study, Baker chose the 17,000 scabs who refused to join a strike in the coal fields of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, in October 1902. "I have always liked, best of all, to study minorities," Baker wrote. "Majorities may have power; minorities often have understanding. Majorities are commonly interested in property; minorities in ideas."[39]

The article was admittedly one-sided, examining neither the cause nor the validity of the strike itself. What Baker was after were the "dramas of human suffering, human loyalty, and human fear" of those who chose to ignore the strike. Among the men he interviewed, Baker found that the general attitude of the non-strikers was no disgust with the union, but rather the desire to maintain the standard of living that most of them had worked so hard to achieve. While many of the scabs were terrorized, often murdered by union members, Baker learned that most of them stayed on the job not just to feed their families, but to reaffirm the democratic right of self-determination. Baker spoke with charles Monie, an engineer from Moosic, Pennsylvania, who owned a good home and had a small family. Monie explained why he had remained with the company:

> Unionism is all right when it is kept within bounds. but when it says to any man, "You can't work until we give you permission," and when it plans to destroy property, I claim that the individual has a right to quit . . . I have a right to work when I like, for what I like, and for whom I like . . .[40]

When Baker began his five-year study of the American industrial/labor scene, he believed that both organizations were essentially the same beast in different guise; both were self-serving and, because of their size and pervasiveness, prone to corruption. Though many of the Muckrakers were, at this time, hostile toward big business, Baker, by exposing the sins of organized labor, indirectly became an ally of the corporate elite. However, as both sides began ostensibly to work together to stifle the economic prosperity of the middle-class, the journalist began to see that corporations were as tainted as the unions:

> No one can deny that . . . the great public has had the worst of the labor dispute and the labor combination. . . . Now, is there any doubt that the income of organized labor and the profits of organized capital have gone up enormously, while the man-on-a-salary and most of the great middle-class . . . have had no adequate increase in earnings? . . . We have been sighing for labor and capital to get together . . . Here they are together; are we any better off?[41]

With the victims and the victimizers exposed, Baker made only a few crude attempts at exposing the causes of such union-corporate corruption. Simplistic as Baker's thoughts on the causes of such corruption may appear, they represent the journalist's first attempt to apply the ideal of democracy to a prevalent social issue. Whether the problem was lawlessness, bossism or graft, the reason, in Baker's mind, was civic laziness. Democracy is a government of the people; the people, therefore, must participate. "Oh, it is the old familiar American story," Baker wrote, "bragging that we can govern ourselves, and then not governing."[42] The problem was not that the union or corporate machines were dishonest, Baker reasoned; the problem was "exactly the problem of the American democracy":

> Indeed, the trouble with the labor union as well as the employers' association to-day is exactly that of our political parties. The honest, conservative . . .

> "good" citizen remains at home and plays with his babies, while the able scalawag runs his organization.[43]

Baker concluded that it was unacceptable for a person to allow his or her money to draw dividends at a corporation or pay for a corrupt labor boss without bothering about the morals of the respective organization. The individual, the fundamental unit of American democracy, must take responsibility for the actions of his or her trusts or union. "It all comes back to you and me . . . individually," Baker wrote. ". . . if this republic is saved it must be saved by individual effort."[44] Quoting from playwright Henrik Ibsen, Baker offered this sentiment as the only lasting solution to the ills of the new industrial society:

> "And men still call for special revolutions," says Henrik Ibsen, "for revolutions in politics, in externals. But all that sort of thing is trumpery. It is the human soul that must revolt."[45]

Baker on Racism

It is a curious problem, this of color.[46]

When Baker began his study of blacks in American society, he carried with him a strange mixture of ignorance, prejudice and idealism. His ignorance was, perhaps, accidental; he had never known a black personally until he went to college. His prejudice, naturally, was an extension of his ignorance and a reflection of the opinions absorbed as a child. (One of Baker's first short stories, for example, written at age eleven, was based on a tale told by his father about Tom, "a nigger.") His idealism, however, was a part of the rising tide of post-Civil War nationalism, the excitement of helping to shape a new democracy. Inspired by the controversial article by Carl Schurz, "Can The South Solve The Negro Problem," published in McClure's in

1903, which was a condemnation of the reactionary attempt of some southern states to repeal the Fifteenth Amendment, Baker, in the fall of 1905, set out to "follow the color line" in order to "evaluate the position of the Negro in American democracy."[47]

For three years, the struggle of American blacks to achieve full citizenship was the dominant issue of Baker's work as a journalist. With his interest in the psychology of mob violence piqued by his experience with the scabs in Pennsylvania, Baker's first contribution to the literature of race relations was a two-part series on lynching, in the North and South, for McClure's. His study of the crime is significant because it set the tone for Following the Color Line, Baker's best known work prior to the chronicles of the life and administration of Woodrow Wilson. In these articles, Baker, while focusing on the violent nature of the crime, shows that he believed the hatred many whites at that time felt for blacks was ignited by something more than a difference in skin color. While the journalist viewed the struggle of blacks for freedom in America as symbolic of the larger struggle for the newly united American nation, he also understood that the history of blacks in this country is fundamentally different than that of "the mingling white races." Germans, Italians, Jews, came to this country voluntarily; blacks were brought by force, bought and sold upon arrival, compelled to do the hard work so white aristocrats could "live lazily, eat richly and sleep softly." That generations of whites had been conditioned to regard blacks as slaves, as inferiors, was not lost on Baker. Believing that human beings could not be set free by "proclamations or legislation or military occupation, but by time growth, education, religion, thought," Baker saw that American blacks were fighting for their freedom on three different fronts: in society, where blacks and poor whites "rubbed together in unclean street"; in politics,

where blacks faced the white aristocratic demagogues who felt the "solution" to the "Negro problem" was either deportation, sterilization or extermination; and in the economy, where blacks not only faced rich and poor whites, but, to a certain extent, faced themselves and their own sense of self-worth.[48]

In Baker's mind, the most fundamental struggle for blacks, or any oppressed people in a capitalist democracy, was the fight for economic liberty. Repeatedly, Baker expressed the problems of whites and blacks in America in terms of class unrest. It was class, not color, that was the catalyst for racial strife. As Baker wrote in a letter to President Roosevelt in 1908:

> I wish as much as you do that we had reached the stage of our civilization where we could avoid the hatred and demagogy of ignorance and class strife: where men could think in national or world terms, not in terms of class, party, union or family. But class action is a condition now existent.[49]

For Baker, the quest of the black race for economic equality was a part of the overriding issue of the early 1900s: namely, the growing power of big business. Increasingly in America, money meant political power; and, generally speaking, blacks did not have money. Largely tenant farmers in the South and wage laborers in the North, American blacks were participants in what Baker called "a world-wide economic struggle." Though affected by the lingering agricultural aristocracy in the South and by competition from Asian and European immigrants and white union members in the North, Baker saw a distinct parallel between the conditions confronting blacks in America:

> The cause of all the trouble in the North is similar to what it is in the South: the underman will not keep his place. . . . The essential feature of the last five years in this country, and it will go down in history as the beginning of great things, has been the vague, crudely powerful effort of the underman . . . to limit in some degree the power of (the) monied aristocracy.[50]

It was during this period, the spring of 1908, as he was completing his final articles for Following the Color Line, that Baker began flirting with the concepts of Socialism.

Depressed by persistent racial antagonism and growing class schism in American society, Baker decided that he "must join something" to help rejuvenate his mind. Inspired by the appearance of the "spirit of service" in the Socialist teachings, Baker, for a brief time, thought the Socialist movement was the panacea he had been seeking. "Intellectual individuality and freedom must not be confused with economic individualism," he wrote in his journals. "Intellectual individualism is quite compatible with economic Socialism."[51] Yet Baker was seeking something that was, in essence, spiritual -- a spiritual doctrine that could be applied to all aspects of American life. while such a sentiment was embodied in Socialism, Baker felt it was absent from socialists:

> If it were not for the socialists, I should be a Socialist. . . . I see that Socialism is, ultimately, the only way out. But when I attend Socialist meetings and hear the intemperate clamor of half ignorant men. . . I am afraid![52]

He soon ceased the flirtation.

In the same way that Baker felt the need for a doctrine to follow, he felt that blacks needed a source of inspiration, a leader to carry the banner in the struggle for freedom. This search for a black spokesperson inevitably led Baker to the philosophies of Dr. Booker T. Washington and Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois.

Baker characterized the party led by Du Bois, the "Northern" party, as representing the intellectuals. Du Bois, who, according to Baker, was born in Massachusetts "of a family that had no history of Southern slavery," was a lonely critic holding up distant ideals." Directly opposite this

"party of protest" was the party led by Washington, a party of service. In Washington's philosophy Baker found many of the sentiments he missed in the socialists and believed were of the utmost importance for American democracy. Washington placed emphasis on duties, not rights. When asked "what shall the Negro do about discrimination?" Baker reported that Washington said: "Make the best of it; overcome it with self-development. . . . Get yourself right, and the world will be right."[53]

Where Du Bois' party was fundamentally political, seeking to meet Jim Crow and disenfranchisement laws with "persistent manly agitation," the Washington party, fueled by the unflinching desire for education, was basically economic. Blacks would never experience social equality until enough political influence could be applied to eliminate Jim Crowism. And blacks would never wield political power with no strong economic foundation. According to Washington, "The trouble with the Negro is that he is all the time trying to get recognition, whereas what he should do is get something to recognize."[54] The split between Washington and Du Bois, Baker felt, was the division between all modes of human thought: the pessimist versus the optimist, the agitator versus the builder. While he saw the value of both schools of thought, in Washington, Baker found the fundamental principles of the New Democracy: education, service, and the emphasis on duties as citizens above rights and privileges.[55]

Baker also realized that blacks could not succeed in their struggle for freedom in a vacuum. If blacks were to become incorporated into American democracy, Baker felt, it must be with the help of whites. "All that stands between him and destruction," Baker wrote, "is the ethical sense of the white man":

> Will the white man's sense of justice and virtue be robust enough to cause him to withhold the hand of unlimited power? Will he see, as . . . Washington

> says, that if he keeps the Negro in the gutter he must stay there with him? The white man and his civilization, not alone the Negro, will rise or fall by that ethical test.[56]

The first step toward meeting that ethical test, Baker believed, was abolishing the sentiment that whites were naturally superior to blacks. To rid America of the idea of white supremacy, Baker called upon the teachings of Jesus Christ as a means of embracing blacks in American society:

> For good comes to men, not as they work alone, but as they work together with that sympathy and understanding which is the only true Democracy. The Great Teacher . . . gave mankind a working principle by means of which . . . mankind could, after all, live together in harmony. . . . And that principle is the Golden Rule. It is the least sentimental, most profoundly practical teaching known to men.[57]

Here Baker had assembled the primary elements of his New Democracy: education, the goal of service, and the growing feeling that democracy transcended legal statutes. Democracy, for Baker, was essentially religious, spiritual. And because of its spiritual nature, in much the same way that Christianity contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire, Baker believed that the spirit of democracy was more powerful than social, political or economic institutions. The institution of slavery, the idea that it was acceptable for one human being to be another's property, could not long survive in a nation committed to the ideals of freedom, liberty and justice. As Baker wrote:

> Slavery was not abolished because the North agitated, or because John Brown raided or Mrs. Stowe wrote a book, or for any other sentimental or superficial reason, but because it was undemocratic. . . For democracy works like this: once its ferment begins to work in a nation it does not stop until it reaches and animates the uttermost man.[58]

Baker on Religion

. . . religion is not decaying; it is only the church.[59]

With his study of the the position of blacks in American society complete, Baker sought new horizons for his journalistic energies. Though he had dismissed Socialism, doubting its viability as a political movement, Baker could not abandon the intellectual attraction of the "idea" of Socialism. For Baker, Socialism had it all: a philosophy of service to society and humankind and a strong commitment to education. But the Socialists, because of their strong sense of party allegiance, Baker believed, lacked the individual moral and intellectual depth necessary for a binding commitment to the ethic of human brotherhood. Because of this love for the party, Baker believed the socialist, when faced with opposition, "soon degenerates into an advocate of force and violence. . . ." Socialism, like unions, trusts, slavery and Jim Crowism, was an institution, and, therefore, more concerned with material matters -- with maintaining power -- than with matters of the spirit. As the first decade of the twentieth century was drawing to a close, Baker felt the world was aching for a new spiritual awakening, a "new idealism," that would "assure the victory of mind over matter." His next project would take him on a broad quest for faith through the spiritual institutions of America. The result was a nine-part series in the American entitled "The Spiritual Unrest."[60]

"A church," Baker wrote, "is not religion: it is a mere human agency for fostering religion." With the nation itself in turmoil over the problems of rapid industrialization and urbanization, the church in America, Baker believed, ought to perform two cardinal functions: it ought to "inspire the individual man with faith in God," and it ought to "draw all men together in a more friendly and democratic relationship."[61] But as the material wealth of the nation began collecting at the top of the social strata, Baker saw the churches, like laborers and industries, becoming increasingly institutionalized -- co-opted by the monarchy of money. With institutionalization came selfishness.

And when a church became selfish, behaved in its own self-interest like a corporation, then it had fallen prey to the new American competitiveness, a "system which destroys inspiration and quenches brotherly enthusiasm."[62] Such was the case with Trinity Church in New York City, a wealthy, autocratic institution that had lost touch with the people afflicted by urban poverty.

Like the system of feudalism in the South that sought to keep blacks in a perpetual state of poverty and the rich whites in power, so was the tendency of wealthy churches, like Trinity, to move "uptown" a sign of an ever-widening class schism. In New York, Baker found the Protestant churches to be impotent, unable or unwilling to meet the challenges, the poverty and disease of twentieth century America. Driven by self-interest, providing faith and comfort to only a "certain class of well-to-do people of Anglo-Saxon or Teutonic stock," Protestantism, in Baker's eyes, had not only lost touch with the people, it had lost its mission of service, its faith. "This is the situation which the Protestant churches are facing," Baker wrote. "Many of the rich are in the churches: nearly all of the poor are outside."[63]

Though Baker had found many Protestant churches in New York City to be wealthy, aristocratic, catering to the upper-class, not to mention xenophobic,[64] he persisted in his belief that the world was being swept by a great wave of idealistic philosophies. The time for the post-bellum materialism, which Baker felt had stifled the intellectual and spiritual life of the nation, to relax its grip on the American mind had come. The pendulum of human thought was swinging back toward spiritualism, toward idealism, toward the essence of the Christian Science and New Thought movements. ". . . the faiths of the materialistic nineteenth century were pessimistic, negative, deterministic," Baker wrote, "while the new faiths are optimistic and positive . . .":

> They are expressed in the spreading and significant Christian Science and New Thought movements, in the revival in interest in spiritualism as a religion, in the idealistic side of socialism.[65]

While the theme of Baker's work was the failure of the institutional church to adequately minister to the social and spiritual needs of the new social order, it becomes increasingly apparent, as the journalist continued to explore the subject, that he was on a personal quest for faith, for a social philosophy that would somehow combine the best of what Socialism and Christianity had to offer. Before beginning "The Spiritual Unrest," Baker had written in his journal:

> . . . How I am driven back again and again upon Jesus Christ. The more I think of human ills and social remedies, the more I see that the teaching of Jesus Christ is the only solution. Far, far beyond socialism (which is a mechanism of social force: not spiritual) stands the unreached Christ in love and serenity.[66]

Baker knew that America's great accomplishments in production had been achieved at a huge cost to children, families, laborers, blacks, women and immigrants. The nation was rich and powerful, but spiritually bankrupt. Baker believed that the true test of any nation's strength, especially a democratic nation, was not in the amount of wealth it possessed, but in the way it treated the weak. Socialism, if it could work, would distribute more equally the burden of the industrial age. Christianity would temper the institutional nature of Socialism, making the burden easier to bear politically.

Baker found his guru, his "prophet . . . out of the wilderness," in Walter Rauschenbush, professor, minister and author of Christianity and The Social Crisis. According to Baker, Rauschenbush believed that the churches -- the Protestant churches -- had been too concerned with the salvation of the individual and had lacked an adequate vision for society as a whole. Without saying why it was so, Baker wrote that Rauschenbush felt the time was ripe

for the church to create "a new social mission and a new evangelism" before the crisis in American society brought it to ruin. "Indeed," Baker wrote, quoting Rauschenbush, "there must soon come 'either a revival of social religion or the deluge.'"[67] This new evangelism, at first seeking to "convict men of sin," then to reconstruct their lives, would give the churches a religion that was dynamic, "'less an institution and more a diffused force.'"[68] Armed with this new evangelism, this super-charged religion, Baker believed "the American church will be the great religious body animating the American democracy."[69] Rauschenbush's "New Christianity" was, for Baker, the best of two worlds. The New Christianity held in its doctrine the social vision of Socialism and the strength of faith and spirit of brotherhood inherent in Christianity. He believed it would be a means of awakening "the spirit of democracy among men."[70]

Baker and The Spirit of Democracy

Democracy, like Christianity, has never really been tried . . . Democracy is not law, not customs, nor institutions. Democracy is a spirit . . . a life . . . a growth . . . And no one can prophesy how far a democracy will ultimately go. . .[71]

In the same way that capitalism set no limits on the amount of wealth an individual could acquire, so Baker believed that the promises inherent in American democracy -- the promise of freedom and justice and the assurance of equality before the law and in society for all citizens -- would allow the human spirit to evolve to greater, as yet unforseen heights. The problem he faced as a journalist was how to open the American mind to the vast possibilities of democracy. As the first decade of the twentieth century came to a close, Baker, in a fiery sermon on the spirit of democracy entitled "The Negro In A Democracy," gave this message to the new American industrial society:

> What we need today is not less democracy, but more democracy. We need the constant re-assertion of the validity of the highest ideals of democracy: the sort of democracy that leaves no man out. That must be our religion from now on.[72]

Between the years 1900-1910, the height of his career as a Muckraker, Baker's vision of democracy underwent a substantial metamorphosis. From his study of labor unions and corporations, Baker drew the conclusion that individuals must be the primary agents for social change. The unions and corporations Baker examined were employing techniques that stifled the individual's right of self-determination. The individual, therefore, must take an active, rather than passive role in the governing of those institutions. The human soul, Baker believed, must revolt in order to triumph over the lawless practices of unions and trusts. Clearly, coming through Baker's reporting is the idea that people must be stronger than the institutions they create.

By the time Baker had concluded his study of the status of blacks in America, he had taken his vision of democracy from the most fundamental component -- the individual -- to the highest social teaching of Christianity -- the Golden Rule. Baker saw that blacks were caught in a cruel dilemma -- severed from their homeland, unwanted and exiled in American white society. For America to do the right thing by blacks, Baker called for education, a commitment of service to fellow human beings, and the spirit of brotherly love embodied in the Golden Rule, for whites and blacks, as a means of incorporating all people in American democracy. In the twilight between the end of his study of race relations and the beginning of his next project, Baker seized a portion of Socialism -- the ideal of Socialism, its vision of social equality -- for use in his democratic theory.

Baker was a spiritual man; he tended to look to the essence of things, to their intangible qualities for meaning. His study of the church in America

revealed to him an institution void of meaning, an organization that had lost its faith. The American Protestant church, Baker concluded, was unfit to meet the social challenges of the twentieth century. The juggernaut of industrialization had brought great wealth to the nation but had made the people and the church moral and spiritual paupers. The nation needed a good dose of spiritualism. The nation, according to Baker, needed a combination of the best of Socialism and Christianity.

The New Democracy, as envisioned by Baker, was just such a synthesis. Baker's ideal democratic state would instill in its citizens a commitment of service to humanity and society, a desire to maintain the highest educational standards, and the spirit of unselfish brotherly love. Such was Baker's grandiose vision for the future of America as formulated during the years 1900-1910.[73]

It is interesting to note that while almost eighty years have passed since Baker and his fellow Muckrakers sought to be the "makers of understanding," little has changed within the fabric of American society. For example, when Baker wrote that labor-capital disputes usually injured most severely the unorganized third party, he could have been reporting on those who were left holding worthless tickets when Eastern Air Lines crumbled, or on those who wanted and needed to work but feared crossing the union picket line. Eighty years ago, Baker told America of Jim Crowism, lynchings, and other violent discriminatory acts perpetrated against blacks. Today, Baker could show America that its government touts as a deterrent to crime a death penalty that disproportionately affects blacks and other minorities. Baker could stroll the halls of the nation's major universities and describe how racism continues to reek in these bastions of enlightenment. The journalist could also interview black leaders who are contemplating changing their designation from

"black" to "African-American," and ask them if changing their name will indeed change human relationships. And when Baker told America in 1909 that the Protestant church had no soul, couldn't he just as easily have told the nation that the icons of the mighty electronic religious empires have clay feet, glass faiths and sticky fingers? As Baker wrote in his autobiography some forty years after the demise of muckraking, "We are still far from the democracy of our vision."[74]

Perhaps naive, or even trite, certainly idealistic, Baker's thoughts on democracy, it seems, show that he believed the evils of the new industrial order could be solved without a hardcore program for economic, social and political reform; a reformation of the spirit, he felt, was enough. Baker distrusted institutions, and, rather than substitute Socialism for capitalism, one institution for another, he believed his democratic dream would come true if the people were given all the facts of America's new social structure. "Theories never get under a man's skin," Baker wrote: "facts do."[75] Though Baker, the Muckraker, revelled in facts, feeling that "the walls of corrupt Jericho" could be shaken by a blast from his trumpet,[76] Baker, the poet, began infusing the presentation of those facts with his gropings for a social theory. "A man has to be more than 'hard-working, thrifty, energetic, a good husband and father'," he wrote in a letter to President Roosevelt in 1908, clarifying his position on Socialism:

> he must also develop a <u>social conscience</u> and this comes gradually, as all growths do, by a succession of larger and larger social-consciousnesses . . . his labor union (or corporation), his national federation (or trust), his <u>class</u>, and finally his country -- and after that, perhaps dimly in the future, the dream of the poet: the brotherhood of man.[77]

Remember, besides a poet and a Muckraker, Baker also fancied himself a prophet.

NOTES

[1]Harold S. Wilson, McClure's Magazine and the Muckrakers (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 208. Reprinted from Baker's private papers, Notebook "I," p. 21-23.

[2]Stanley K. Schultz, "The Morality of Politics: The Muckrakers' Vision of Democracy," The Journal of American History, 1965, p. 527.

[3]Arthur and Lila Weinberg, The Muckrakers (New York: Capricorn Books, 1964), p. 432.

[4]Ray Stannard Baker, American Chronicle (New York: Chrales Scribner's Sons, 1945), p. 2. John E. Semonche, Ray Stannard Baker: A Quest for Democracy in Modern America, 1870-1918 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, The University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 317.

[5]To understand Baker as a journalist it is also important to examine his alter ego David Grayson. Several theories have been put forward by biographers and friends of Baker concerning the invention of Grayson and the effect it had on his muckrkaing. See Semonche and Robert C. Bannister, Jr., Ray Stannard Baker: The Mind and Thought of a Progressive (New Haven, Connecticut, The Yale University Press, 1966). Baker himself made this summation: "If Grayson was a 'mood,' as one commentator long ago called it, it was a mood that was life-giving and life-saving for me. . . . As a 'Muckraker,' hating the want of humanity in our common life, I tried to expose, arouse, drive people to better social relationships: I like to think in later years that David Grayson was working for the same thing, more or less blindly, in another way." (Baker, American Chronicle, p. 24).

[6]Semonche, p. 317.

[7]Baker, in the early days of the muckraking movement, claimed to distrust politics, believing it to be "about the worst possible means of securing an honest and thorough examination of the difficult economic and social problems, let alone reaching reasonable solutions of them." Only later, when Baker began his relationship with Woodrow Wilson, did he realize that in a democracy all things are eventually played out in the political arena. (Baker, American Chronicle, p. 249-250).

[8]Quoted in Bannister, p. 134-136.

[9]Baker, American Chronicle, p. 83.

[10]Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy, Vol. I (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1944), p. 8.

[11]Baker, Following the Color Line: American Negro Citizenship in the Progressive Era (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1908), p. 235.

[12]The Principles of the Ku Klux Klan: "This is an institution of Chivalry, Humanity, Mercy, and Patriotism; embodying in its genius and its principles all that is chivalric in conduct, noble in sentiment, generous in manhood, and patriotic in purpose." (Reprinted in The Great Thoughts compiled by George Seldes, [New York: Ballantine Books, 1985], p. 232).

[13]John M. Harrison and Harry H. Stein, Muckraking: Past, Present and Future (Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park and London, 1973), p. 45.

[14]John A. Garraty, The American Nation: A History of the United States Since 1865, Vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1966), p. 467.

[15]Ronald C. White, Jr., and C. Howard Hopkins, The Social Gospel: Religion and Reform in Changing America (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Temple University Press, 1976), p. 51.

[16]Semonche, p. 216.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Garraty, p. 568.

[19]Richard Hofstadter, The Progressive Movement 1900-1915 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersy, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 1.

[20]Arthur Mann, The Progressive Era: Liberal Renaissance or Liberal Failure? (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1963), p. 3; Garraty, p. 565; Hofstadter, p. 4.

[21]Mann, p. 1; Garraty, p. 566.

[22]Weinberg, p. xiii.

[23]Hofstadter, p. 2. In addition to the maldistribution of wealth, the trend toward concentration in industry sounded an alarm in the Progressive mind. In 1899, more than 1,200 firms were absorbed in mergers, the resulting combinations valued at $2.2 billion. By 1904, there were 318 industrial combination with an aggregate capital of some $7.5 billion. (Garraty, p. 566). The Progressives, who considered bigness in industry

fundamentally evil, largely because the corrupt political machines were often fed by big-business "contributions," demanded that the huge new "trusts" be broken up or at least strictly controlled. (Garraty, p. 566; Hofstadter, p. 10).

[24]Wilson, p. v; Louis Filler, The Muckrakers (Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park and London, 1976), p. viii; Baker, American Chronicle, p. 183. To achieve lasting success for their democratic social agenda, the Progressives believed control of the political parties and state and local governments must be taken from the bosses and returned to the voters. Toward this end, the Progressives initiated such state-level political reforms as the direct primary, which put candidate selection in the hands of the people rather than the political machines; the initiative, which made it possible for organizations of citizens to propose legislation; the referendum, which made it possible for voters to pass on state laws; and the recall, which was a means of removing corrupt or incompetent officials before the expiration of their term of office. (Hofstadter, p. 10). The Progressives could also claim such social reforms as laws raising the age children could leave school, minimum wage rates and limits on the work-day and work-week for women and women's sufferage. (Ibid., p. 8-9).

[25]Harrison and Stein, p. 11; Garraty, p. 567.

[26]C.C. Regier, The Era of the Muckrakers (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, The University of North Carolina Press, 1932), p. 147.

[27]Weinberg, p. xviii; Harrison and Stein, p. 15. Muckraking is associated with four major American press traditions, according to Harrison and Stein. It bears closest resemblance to investigative journalism; less to advocacy journalism because the Muckrakers sought to preserve their autonomy by refusing to commit to a single cause or master. Where investigative journalism serves the "watchdog" function on government, and inevitably produces a non-neutral account, muckraking tended to encompass a wider spectrum of society. Muckraking denounced and praised, and, by tone, urged people to action. However, muckraking rarely degenerated into sensationalistic or yellow journalism, which manufactured news for the sake of profit.

[28]Baker, American Chronicle, p. 183.

[29]Ibid., p. 133.

[30]Ibid., p. 188.

[31]Harvey Swados, Years of Conscience: The Muckrakers (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1962), p. 12, excerpted from Sinclair's article "Now The Muckrake Men I Know," published in The Independent, 1908. In 1906, about the time yellow journalism gave the muckraking movement a sensational tinge, President Theodore Roosevelt delivered a speech to the Gridiron Club in Washington, D.C., in which he called all the writers who were engaged in the exposure of corruption "muckrakers." Though Roosevelt's remarks, which were inspired by Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, were ignited by the series "The Treason Of The Senate" in Hearst's Cosmopolitan, and were aimed directly at yellow newspaper and magazine writers, the name stuck to the likes of Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, Baker, Upton Sinclair, to name a few, who considered their work to be conscientious and scholarly, based on meticulous research. (Weinberg, p. xix; Regier, p. 57-58).

[32]Regier, p. 147.

[33]Wilson, p. 208; reprinted from Baker's private papers, Notebook "I," p. 21-23.

[34]Baker, "Capital And Labor Hunt Together: Chicago The Victim Of The New Industrial Conspiracy," McClure's, XXI (1903), p. 463.

[35]Baker, American Chronicle, p. 164; Baker, "The New Prosperity," McClure's, XV (1900), p. 85. Baker wrote ten articles between the years 1900-1905 on corporations and unions. They are: "What The U.S. Steel Corporation Really Is, And How It Works," McClure's, XVIII (1901); "How Labor Is Organized,"World's Work IV (1902); "The Right To Work: The Story Of The Non-Striking Miners," McClure's, XX (1903); "Capital And Labor Hunt Together," McClure's, XXI (1903); "The Trust's New Tool -- The Labor Boss," McClure's, XXII (1903); "A Corner In Labor: What's Happening In San Francisco Where Unionism Holds Undisputed Sway," McClure's, XXII (1904); "The Reign of Lawlessness: Anarchy And Despotism In Colorado," McClure's, XXIII (1904); "Organized Capital Challenges Organized Labor: The New Employers' Association Movement," McClure's, XXIII (1904); "Parker And Roosevelt On Labor: Real Views Of The Two Candidates On The Most Vital National Problem," McClure's, XXIV (1904).

[36]Baker, "The New Prosperity," McClure's, XV (1900), p. 90.

[37]Baker, "How Labor is Organized," p. 2427.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Baker, American Chronicle, p. 167.

[40]Baker, "The Right To Work," p. 324-325.

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[41]Baker, "Capital And Labor Hunt Together," p. 463.

[42]Baker, "The Trust's New Tool -- The Labor Boss," p. 33.

[43]Baker, "Capital And Labor Hunt Together," p. 462.

[44]David Chalmers, "Ray Stannard Baker's Search For Reform," Journal of the History of Ideas, XIX (1958), p. 423.

[45]Baker, "The Trust's New Tool -- The Labor Boss," p. 43.

[46]Baker, Following the Color Line: American Negro Citizenship in the Progressive Era (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1908), p. 154.

[47]Bannister, p. 127; Semonche, p. 198.

[48]Baker, Following the Color Line, p. 147, 234, 17, 301.

[49]Chalmers, p. 428.

[50]Baker, Following the Color Line, p. 269.

[51]Chalmers, p. 427-428.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Baker, Following the Color Line, 220-223.

[54]Ibid., p. 304, 229-230.

[55]Ibid., p. 304.

[56]Ibid., p. 306, 229.

[57]Ibid., p. 306-307.

[58]Ibid., p. 234, 243. Just as Baker had tied his study of labor-capital relations to the development of the New Democracy, he further developed those ideas in study of race relations. It must be noted, however, that his handling of the material is significantly different. Baker's most glaring offense in his lengthy study is that he habitually refers to blacks as "types"

and generally discusses black Americans in the third person. In his study of the white scabs in Pennsylvania, Baker named the miners he interviewed and usually told something about their homes and families. When a white person's photograph was printed, the caption included the person's name. In his study of blacks in America, with the exception of Washington and Du Bois, Baker referred to blacks as either an "intelligent type," a "criminal type," an "illiterate, floating type." Similarly, the pictures that appeared with his articles carried like captions. Rarely did Baker use the human interest technique to illustrate the feelings of individual black people who dealt daily with American racism. He used the technique effectively with the white scabs. It is also significant to note that when Baker wrote of the lower class whites and blacks, he described whites as "uneducated" and blacks as "ignorant." Whether Baker's lack of intimacy is a reflection of a conscious, or unconscious, prejudice on the journalist's part, or a device to placate a predominantly white readership, is difficult to determine.

[59]Baker, "The Spiritual Unrest: The Case Against Trinity," The American Magazine, LXVIII (1909), p. 16.

[60]Semonche, p. 214-215. Baker wrote nine articles that examined the Christian Science movements, the new role of the church as a wealthy institution, and the doctrines of the Social Gospel. The articles were serialized in The American Magazine under the title "The Spiritual Unrest."

[61]Baker, "The Spiritual Unrest: The Case Against Trinity," p. 4; Baker, "The Spiritual Unrest: Lift Men From The Gutter Or Remove The Gutter, Which?," The American Magazine, LXVIII (1909), p. 227.

[62]Baker, "The Spiritual Unrest: The Case Against Trinity," p. 13.

[63]Baker, "The Spiritual Unrest: The Godlessness of New York," The American Magazine, LXVIII (1909), p. 127.

[64]Ibid., p. 119.

[65]Baker, "The Spiritual Unrest: Healing The Sick In The Churches," The American Magazine, LXVII (1908), p. 194.

[66]Chalmers, p. 430.

[67]Baker, "The Spiritual Unrest: A Vision Of The New Christianity," The American Magazine, LXIX, (1910), p. 180.

[68]Ibid., 182.

[69]Ibid., p. 183.

[70]Baker, "The Spiritual Unrest: The Faith Of The Unchurched," The American Magazine, LXVIII (1909), p. 446.

[71]Baker, "The Negro In A Democracy," The Independent, LXVII (1910), p. 584; Baker, "Negro Sufferage In A Democracy," Atlantic Monthly, CVI (1910), p. 613.

[72]Baker, "The Negro In A Democracy," p. 588.

[73]While the Muckrakers did expose a great deal of social injustice and corruption, they frequently have been criticized for being too naive, too idealistic, even myopic in their view of the new American society. Walter Lippman charged the Muckrakers with failing to understand how the nature of industry had been changed by wealth and monopolies and the deep effect that had on American life. In Lippman's opinion, the Muckrakers ranted and raved against various abuses and spewed forth some crude analysis and remedies without ever touching the bases of the whole problem, which was that American capitalism could only allow a few to taste the fruits of wealth and power. William Archer, who reached a similar conclusion, found fault with the Muckrakers who were never willing to admit that collectivism was the only means of liberating workers from the wage slavery perpetuated by the capitalist plutocracy. Frederick C. Howe, in Confessions of a Reformer (1925), argued that the entire Progressive Movement was flawed. According to Howe, the Progressives -- including liberals and Muckrakers -- believed that it was simply enough to make people see the wrongs in society. What the Progressives failed to realize, Howe believed, was that the American mind, which holds just as much faith in capitalism as in democracy, if not more, will rarely, if ever, turn against practices that readily turn a profit. (See Regier, p. 209-210).

[74]Baker, American Chronicle, p. 183. By 1912, because many of the Muckrakers were dissatisfied with their work and because the Progressive politicians had taken the spirit of reform into the political arena, muckraking had virtually come to an end as a movement. (Regier, p. 206). Yet there were other, more subtle reasons for the demise of muckraking. Jacob Scher, professor of journalism at Morthwestern University, suggested that the increasing international tensions that ultimately led to World War I contributed to muckraking's downfall. Scher also cites Wilson's "New Freedom" platform as stealing much of the thunder preached in the literature of reform. But the germ that was the final undoing of muckraking, and is anathema to journalists in general, was Rockefeller's creation of the press agent. This made it possible for big business, as Scher put it, to "unsell the public on practically anything." (Weinberg, p. xxii).

NOTES

Whether muckraking was murdered by external forces or committed suicide by "going too far at times," as sinclair suggested, the movement did manage to leave an imprint on the developing American society.

[75]Baker, American Chronicle, p. 188.

[76]Ibid.

[77]Chalmers, p. 428-429.